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The Collaborative Economy in Action: Context and Outline of Country Reports

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Introduction

The book titled *The Collaborative Economy in Action: European Perspectives* is one of the important outcomes of the COST Action CA16121, *From Sharing to Caring: Examining the Socio-Technical Aspects of the Collaborative Economy* (short name: *Sharing and Caring*; sharingandcaring.eu) that was active between March 2017 and September 2021. The Action was funded by the European Cooperation in Science and Technology – COST (www.cost.eu/actions/CA16121). The main objective of the COST Action *Sharing and Caring* is the development of a European network of researchers and practitioners interested in investigating the collaborative economy models, platforms, and their socio-technological implications. The network involves scholars, practitioners, communities, and policymakers. The COST Action *Sharing and Caring* helped to connect research initiatives across Europe and enabled scientists to develop their ideas by collaborating with peers. This collaboration opportunity represented a boost for the participants’ research, careers, and innovation potential.

The *Sharing and Caring* network opened new opportunities for 312 participants involved in four working groups, five task forces, and coming from 39 different countries, including 37 European countries and two partner countries (Georgia and Australia). The participants had very diverse backgrounds, from human-computer interaction, computer science, sociology, geography, and business to law and political sciences. Scholars collaborated with practitioners, industry representatives and community activists in studying the collaborative economy phenomena through a practice-focused approach. More than 120 short stories were collected by the participants, as well as 15 in-depth ethnographic case studies. The members of the COST Action assembled a list of bibliographic resources on the collaborative economy and a directory including organizations, scholars, and activists involved in the collaborative economy. The four Working Groups focused on: examining collaborative economy practices and communities (WG1) and digital platforms in use (WG2), studying the impacts of the collaborative economy (WG3), and identifying mechanisms to activate and support the collaborative economy (WG4). The participants of the COST Action organized two Training Schools: one in Funchal, Madeira, in November 2017, and one in Aarhus, Denmark, in August 2019, bringing together scholars, experts, and activists with more than 50 early career researchers. Thirty-eight researchers were supported to travel for Short Term Scientific Missions, 26 early career researchers from Inclusiveness Target Countries received financial support for their participation in international conferences, and 7 participants benefited from virtual mobility grants.

The main aim of this book is to provide a comprehensive overview of the collaborative economy (CE) in European countries with a variety of its aspects for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon as a whole. For this reason, in July 2017, an open call for country reports was distributed among the members of the COST Action *Sharing and Caring*. Representatives of the member countries were invited to produce short country reports covering: definition(s) of the CE; types and models of the CE; key stakeholders involved; as well as legislation and technological tools relevant for the CE. Submitted reports varied in length and regarding the level of detail included, in accordance with how much information was available in each respective country at the time of writing. Editors of the book have compiled these early reports into a summary report, which was intended as a first step in mapping the state of the CE in Europe. The *Member Countries Report on the Collaborative Economy*, edited by Gaia Mosconi, Agnieszka Lukaszewicz, and Gabriela Avram (2018) that was published on the *Sharing and Caring* website, represented its first synergetic outcome and provided an overview of the CE phenomenon as interpreted and manifested in each of the countries part of the network. Additionally, Sergio Nassare-Aznar, Kosjenka Dumančić, and Giulia Priora compiled a *Preliminary Legal Analysis of Country Reports on Cases of Collaborative Economy* (2018).

In 2018, after undertaking an analysis of the previous reports' strengths and weaknesses, the book editors issued a call for an updated version of these country reports. Prof. Ann Light advised the editorial team, proposing a new format for country reports and 4000 words limit. The template included: Introduction, Definition, Key Questions, Examples, Illustration, Context, Developments, Issues, Other Major Players, and Relevant Literature. The new template was approved by the Management Committee in October 2018. The task force that had supported the production of the first series of country reports (Dimitar Trajanov, Maria del Mar Alonso, Bálint Balázs, Kosjenka Dumančić, and Gabriela Avram) acted as mentors for the team of authors in

each country. The final reports arrived at the end of 2018, bringing the total number of submissions to 30 (twenty-nine European countries plus Georgia). A call for book editors was issued, and a new editorial team was formed by volunteers from the participants of the COST Action: Andrzej Klimczuk, Vida Česnuitytė, Cristina Miguel, Santa Mijalche, Gabriela Avram, Bori Simonovits, Bálint Balázs, Kostas Stefanidis, and Rafael Laurenti. The editorial team organized the double-blind reviews of reports and communicated to the authors the requirements for improving their texts. After reviews, the authors submitted updated versions of their country reports providing up-to-date interdisciplinary analysis on the state of the CE in 2019, when the reports were collected. During the final phase, the chapters were again reviewed by the lead editors together with all editorial team members. At the time, the intention was to update these reports again just before the end of the COST Action *Sharing and Caring* in 2021 and to produce a third edition. However, the COVID-19 pandemic changed these plans. Thus, this final volume was created by 82 scholars—editors and contributors—and consists of reports on 27 countries participating in the COST Action.

This chapter is organized as follows. First, a short overview of the basic theoretical approaches to CE is presented. Further, the structure of the book is discussed in detail, and the text closes with a summary.

Defining the Collaborative Economy Phenomenon

The term *collaborative economy* (CE) itself is relatively new, and according to the European Commission, the term is used interchangeably with the term *sharing economy* (SE). The term SE was frequently used when early models, such as Airbnb or ZipCar, appeared and gained popularity, especially in the United States, but it was afterwards substituted with the term CE in the European contexts. The country reports in this collection often use the two terms interchangeably, further illustrating the fact that a generally agreed definition is still missing. However, the ambition driving the term CE is to create specific European economic models with greater emphasis on the community's involvement. In Europe, it is still the case that the definition of the CE and SE remains fuzzy, including both non-profit and for-profit models, supported by both monetary and non-monetary exchanges among participants. The phenomenon is complex, covering various fields of activity, as well as operating at various levels, ranging from the international to the national, regional, and local. Some definitions focus mostly on sustainability, while others highlight technological and financial aspects and business models specific to the phenomenon.

The examples included in this book describe both aspects of the phenomenon. The collection speaks to the business side of the peer-to-peer exchange and the use of intermediary digital platforms, as well as to a variety of bottom-up civic initiatives that aim at promoting new societal values among society members without a direct economic benefit. Both for-profit and non-profit stakeholders are taking part and pushing forward the phenomenon, exploring challenges and opportunities offered by the expanding intersection between the development of information and communications technologies (ICTs) infrastructure and societal needs. In presented reports, national, regional, and local governments frequently come up as crucial stakeholders involved in the development of the CE, especially when it comes to laws and regulations.

The Book's Structure

The book consists of 27 main chapters. Each chapter gives a perspective on the situation of the CE and SE in the following countries: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. The chapters in the book are arranged in the alphabetical order of countries' names. The authors of the chapters were asked to give the titles of their chapters that highlight the most important aspects of the CE in the respective country.

Moreover, the authors of the chapters were asked to follow a standard template during the preparation of the country report. Thus, each chapter includes the following sections:

- Introduction: A national overview in a 6-8 lines summary, detailing the priorities and state of the art of CE in that country.
- Definition of the CE: Details on any definitions used in the country, for instance, in government reports or grey literature; alternatively, what are the terms used in particular contexts.
- Key Questions: Any key question(s) worth asking in the country that reveals how the area is approaching (or hoping to approach) CE.
- Examples: At least 4-6 major CE local players giving a flavour of the home-grown contribution, with a line of the description and a URL (where existing), notes about platforms and their design.
- Illustrations: Visuals about CE market shares and/or activities, with a caption.
- Context: National legislation affecting major players (e.g., Airbnb or Uber): tax law, labour law, consumer law, property law, transportation law, regulation on tourism, other relevant regulations. Also, any existing national and regional practices that give a particular quality to the initiatives appearing locally, such as old beliefs or customs about sharing.
- Developments: Information on growth areas or rapid changes for the country, with a description of challenges and opportunities.
- Issues: General issues that are particularly interesting for how they are being handled in a country (e.g., sustainability and privacy); how is sharing and collaboration understood in ordinary life and civil society, for example, the general sharing practices and mentality.
- Other Major Players: Academic research; unions or organizations that are looking at workers' concerns, commercial lobbying groups, membership organizations, etc.
- Relevant Literature: A bibliography of reports and papers that would support further interest.

The latter sections of the country reports differ greatly from country to country. This is because the CE is currently unevenly developed in European countries, and authors reporting on one country or another have been challenged to find the appropriate information for the report. In any case, contributions cover the above-mentioned

participating countries and constitute a comprehensive volume for the analysis of the phenomenon of the CE.

A Brief Outline of the Book's Chapters

In the first chapter, *Current and Prospective Expansion of the Sharing Economy in Albania*, Eglantina Hysa, Alba Demneri Kruja, and Vera Shiko start with the description of two strategies (CoM 2009; MIPA 2014) implemented a decade ago by the government and a few additional legal documents that contributed to the modernization of the digital market and e-services, as well as the SE development in the country. Currently, some selected sectors are more involved in the SE: agriculture, healthcare, tourism, accommodation, and transportation. Though, SE perceived as social innovation is subject to some limitations and barriers in the country. It is mostly because of lack of experience, but also because the SE concept is considered as unclear, the lack of transparency, the challenge of missing regulations and clear operating standards. At the same time, Albania, as a relatively small, post-communist country, which until now was categorized as a transitory one, has a great potential for the development of the SE in the future.

In the chapter, *Country Report on the Collaborative Economy in Austria*, Malte Höfner and Rainer Rosegger state that the CE is mainly characterized by activities in the accommodation sector as part of tourism and platforms connected to financial services (Behrendt et al. 2017). These two sectors are extremely important for Austria. Meanwhile, other services in most of the economic sectors operating sharing platforms are less developed than the European Union's average. Another particularity is that the forefront developments are taking place in the capital region of Vienna, while the majority of Austrians live in rural regions (Heiling and Schumich 2017, 2018). The authors raise questions on law challenges, complex tax systems, precarisation of services, and other constraints significant in managing this innovative economic process. The main aim, according to the chapter authors, is to strengthen the SE in the country by including various initiatives from the market players.

According to Liesbeth Huybrechts, Shenja van der Graaf, Ruben D'Hauwers, and Jo Pierson, authors of the chapter *Belgium: Adoption of the Sharing Economy*, the development of the SE in Belgium was not as active as in other countries. But in the recent decade, its development is speeding up, accompanying the belief that it could contribute to a more sustainable society (Digimedia 2017; United Nations 2017). The providers and the intermediaries of the online platforms that facilitate the transactions, as well as the individual users of the services, play the most important roles in the move towards the circular and the SE. However, debates continue to take place in Belgium around phenomenon definition and economic, quantitative, digital, and urban-rural aspects of the SE.

In the chapter, *Sharing Economy in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Aleksandra Figurek and Rahman Nurković state that the term *sharing economy* prevails over the term *collaborative economy* in their country, and it implies goods and services accessed through digital platforms. In the recent decade, the SE has been growing significantly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nevertheless, it is below the level of developed economies, and the supply of sharing is still limited. Often, insufficiently adapted legislation makes involvement in the SE cause violation of existing laws.

In the chapter, *Setting the Stage of the Sharing Economy: The Case of Bulgaria*, Stela Baltova and Albena Vutsova report that SE is not a new phenomenon in the country; it has just gained new connotations with the development of Internet platforms (Georgieva et al. 2019). There are no precise figures on the growth of the SE in Bulgaria (European Commission 2018), but some problematic issues are evident: the lack of a generally agreed definition of the term *sharing economy*, as well as the importance of data protection regarding both customers and providers of platform work.

Further, in the chapter *The State of the Sharing Economy in Croatia: Legal Framework and Impact on Various Economic Sectors*, Kosjenka Dumančić and Anita Čeh Časni spotlight the SE as a rather new phenomenon in the country, with several highly involved industries such as accommodation, transportation, and finance. Non-profit and for-profit SE companies are well established in bigger cities and in the tourism sector. However, Croatia ranks below the European Union's average according to digital platforms per 1 mln of the population (Eurostat 2019a). Currently, the country has adopted the definition suggested by the European Commission, and there is no specific national definition. The relationships between the actors participating in SE still lack a legal basis (Dumančić 2017). Lately, the debate on unfair market competition caused by SE has been particularly relevant.

In the chapter, *The Sharing Economy in Practice in the Czech Republic: A Small Post-Communist Economy*, Libena Tetreva describes the SE as having foundations in the pre-revolutionary period and currently gaining increasing importance in the country. The greatest potential for the SE in the Czech Republic is in the transport, accommodation, and finance sectors, but the SE here is somehow still below the level it reached in developed economies. The term SE is not rigorously defined (Marek et al. 2017). Frequently, the platforms are used as a tool for reimagining old business models, as well as supporting social innovation (Klesla 2018; Veber et al. 2016). The absence of a legal framework creates scepticism among potential users and deters some companies from getting involved in the SE.

According to Myriam Lewkowicz, the author of the chapter *France: An Ecosystem Favourable to the Development of the Sharing Economy*, the SE has been a topic of interest in the country for several years. A large share of the country's population is involved in the SE as either consumers or service providers (Barbezieux and Herody 2016). The main reasons for this are saving and/or earning money. It is recognized that the collaborative dimension can be a source of growth in the country (Pipame 2015). But state agencies and associations still use various definitions of the SE phenomenon (DGCCRF 2018). The key questions related to the SE in France concern political, legal, and tax issues.

In the chapter, *Georgia: Reality and Future Perspectives of the Sharing Economy Development*, Maka Kikilashvili lists numerous digital platforms that are active in the country, giving customers and suppliers the possibility to connect and exchange products or services. Most of these companies operate in the capital city of the country, and several are also active in the other cities. The essential spheres related to the operation of the SE, such as mortgaging, purchasing, or hiring of real estate, and transferring passengers, are regulated. The term SE does not have a commonly accepted definition in Georgia (Forbes Georgia 2014; Gorog 2016). Because of the latter and also due to other reasons, the forming, developing and promoting of the SE as a specific direction is an issue of the future.

In the chapter, *Germany: Co-Creating Cooperative and Sharing Economies*, Soenke Zehle, Hannes Käfer, Julia Hartnik, and Michael Schmitz report an ascending trend of the SE in the country. Numerous initiatives, social movements and start-ups related to sectors such as mobility, accommodation, co-working, clothing, food, consumer goods, finance, time banking, and education have emerged (Loske 2019). At the same time, the use of sharing services in Germany is still below the European Union's average (European Commission 2018). Mainly, this is happening because of the lack of time or interest, the lack of technical knowledge, the lack of user trust, and the lack of clarity regarding legal, tax, and labour issues.

In the chapter, *The Fragile Landscape of the Sharing Economy in Hungary*, Bori Simonovits, Anikó Bernát, and Bálint Balázs report that one-third of the Hungarian population, predominantly the wealthier, metropolitan, family-oriented, more educated, and younger generations, are open toward SE services (Buda et al. 2020). The primary motivations for this are lower prices and easier access to goods and services. Though, a proper and widely accepted definition of the term SE is still lacking (Dudás and Boros 2019). Companies involved in SE are quite fragile because of the lack of proper regulation and the lack of protection for involved market players.

Stefano Valerio, Monica Postiglione, Venere Stefania Sanna, Chiara Bassetti, Giulia Priora, and Cary Yungmee Hendrickson report in their chapter *Italian Style: Legislative Developments in Accommodation, Mobility, Food, Delivery, and Transport in Italy's Collaborative and Sharing Economy*, that the SE in Italy covers a wide variety of actors and organizational models, including profit-oriented and non-profit companies, as well as community-based practices (Grasseni 2014; Rossi 2018). Numerous initiatives operate in a variety of domains of activity and at various geographical levels. The most promising perspectives for the SE concern food delivery and mobility (Gagliardi and Mobili 2020). Unsolved issues are related to the lack of a unique national definition of the phenomenon, gaps in the labour law, and the roles of newly involved actors.

The authors of the chapter, *Sharing Economy in Lithuania: Steady Development with Focus on Transportation Sector*, Vida Česnuitytė, Leta Dromantienė, Dainius Bernotas, Jūratė Banytė, Elena Vitkauskaitė, and Eglė Vaičiukynaitė, report that SE businesses were created in the country almost a decade ago, and now more and more Internet platforms for buying, selling, or sharing services and goods are emerging. By the end of 2019, one-fifth of the population of the country was involved in SE-related activities (Eurostat 2019b). Domains such as transportation, accommodation, financing, and rental of goods are the most prominent SE sectors within the country. However, as a new phenomenon, it has not received enough attention from the official institutions until now; there is no official definition of the concept yet, and the legislation has not been adjusted sufficiently to actions related to the SE activities (Skaistė 2019).

According to Brano Glumac, author of the chapter *Luxembourg: Digital Innovation Challenges*, the dynamic developments of the economy and demographics in Luxembourg generated a high need for digital and social innovations, including the SE. The sector of particular interest in this sense in Luxembourg is mobility. Official statistics on the SE, as well as a unique definition of the phenomenon, is still missing (TIR 2016). For practical reasons, the understanding of SE is related to the incentives connected to sharing exclusive property, extending the usage of some goods, and reducing the consumption of resources. The biggest challenges concern the regulation of relations among major players, taxes, social insurance, job quality, and some other aspects of the SE operation in the country (Wirtz 2018).

In the chapter, *The Sharing Economy in the Netherlands: Grounding Public Values in Shared Mobility and Gig Work Platforms*, Martijn de Waal and Martijn Arets present the Netherlands as the pioneers of the SE, who transformed local initiatives of borrowing into SE supported digital platforms. The recognition of the social and environmental benefits of these platforms stimulated the expansion of the phenomenon widely. The SE anticipates more flexible organization and operation of jobs, but the development of the legislation moving from traditional to platform mediated work is still underway, and enforcing the approved legislation is also encountering difficulties because it requires radically new relations among market players (Bex et al. 2018).

In the chapter, *The Potential of the Sharing Economy in a Developing Country: The Case of North Macedonia*, Dimitar Trajanov, Julijana Angelovska, Tamara Mihajlovska, and Marija Poprizova present the SE as an innovative and progressive business model that creates the way for solving issues specific to a traditional economy occurring in North Macedonia, for example, capital investment, economy management and regulation. Currently, the most advanced sectors are transport and tourism. There is no official definition of the concept (Pandev and Sarkanjac 2017) nor national legislation to regulate SE activities (State Revenue Office 2018). These are probably the reasons for people's reservation in using digital platforms, even if the universities actively promote the SE in North Macedonian society.

In the chapter, *The Sharing Economy in Norway: Emerging Trends and Debates*, Trond Halvorsen, Christoph Lutz, and Johan Barstad report that the Norwegian government has a favourable attitude towards the SE. Currently, almost one-quarter of Norwegians are involved in SE activities; most networks are based in urban areas and among housing cooperatives. There are several definitions in use, but the common aspect specified is "an economic activity intermediated by digital platforms" (Regjeringen 2017). At the same time, a special committee has identified the need to clarify legislation, adapt taxation, and balance the interests of various players in relation to the operation of the SE.

In the chapter, *Initiatives in the Sharing Economy Scheme: The Case of Poland*, Agnieszka Lukaszewicz and Aleksandra Nadolska state that more and more people in Poland use digital platforms that allow them to share goods and services. Nevertheless, the concept of the SE is still in development in Poland, and currently, it is perceived as a social and economic model based on sharing material and non-material resources (Nadolska and Nadolski 2019), being an innovative form of doing business via Internet platforms (Pietrewicz and Sobiecki 2016). Issues such as tax regulation, labour market relations, competition, and trust in providers are not yet solved in the country and cause confusion leading to some conflicts in the labour market and some specific sectors, primarily in transportation and accommodation.

In the chapter, *Collaborative Economy in Portugal: The Recent Evolution*, Mela Bettega, Raul Masu, and Vera Lúcia Alves Pereira Diogo notice that only 17% of Portuguese have ever used services via collaborative platforms by 2018, and that is the lowest rate among the European Union-28 Member States (European Commission 2018). The SE concept is mostly mentioned in the contexts of economic growth, fighting climate change, eco-sustainability and enhancing the quality of life. There is no country-wide agreed official definition of CE and SE; the SE is mentioned in the governmental plan supporting the development of a circular economy (Diário da República 2017). Considering the risk involved by the lack of regulation, the

government is planning to regulate short-term rentals (Patricio 2018), shared mobility (Nunes 2018) and other sectors involving sharing practices.

In the chapter, *Serbia: Sharing Economy as a New Market Trend and Business Model* by Maja Ćirić, Svetlana Ignjatijević, Aleksandra Fedajev, Marija Panić, Dejan Sekulić, Tanja Stanišić, Miljan Leković, and Sanela Arsić report that in the context of economic crisis and increasing unemployment, the SE in Serbia evolves as a new economic model for earning income and sharing resources. Among such activities, the most usual is online buying and collaboration for sharing resources through Internet platforms and mobile applications. Tourism appears to be the sector with the greatest potential for further developments in SE. However, further research and knowledge on the phenomenon are needed in relation to the SE in Serbia.

According to Jolana Gubalova, Sona Capkova, and Dagmar Kokavcova, authors of the chapter *Socio-Economical Aspects of the Collaborative Economy in Slovakia*, there are many domestic and several foreign digital platforms related to the SE (CE) activities in Slovakia. These platforms are especially important for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as for individuals as a source of additional income. The most developed platforms cover transportation, tourism, and accommodation. However, there is no legislation concerning the protection, safety and quality of goods and services for involved parties and relations on the labour market (Pellegrini 2016). In the meantime, most obligations are transferred to service providers.

In the chapter, *A Snapshot of Slovenia's Collaborative Economy*, Aleš Završnik, Katja Simončič, Manja Kitek Kuzman, and Tomaž Kušar show that the SE (CE) came into force in Slovenia in 2015. Since then, it has expanded, mainly in the sectors of tourism and accommodation, and a regulatory framework was created. Notwithstanding, the field of the SE still lacks regulation: the concept of SE isn't clearly defined, and CE is used interchangeably (Kralj 2017); questions related to ensuring economic, social, and legal security to workers within the SE and identifying the stakeholders for the social dialogue with the government remain open in the country (Hreščak 2018).

In the chapter, *An Introduction to the Collaborative Economy in Spain*, Rosa M. Garcia-Teruel discusses how digital platforms, as new social and business models, contribute significantly to the creation of workplaces in the context of high levels of unemployment in the country. However, SE phenomenon in Spain is not yet properly conceptualized (Miralles et al. 2017) nor regulated enough (Muñoz 2016). Such a situation can call for conflict and could undermine the reputation of SE.

Katie Berns, in the chapter *Sweden: A City-Centric Sharing Economy Built on Trust*, states that the level of CE development in Sweden is about average in comparison to the rest of European countries. Currently, there is no official definition of SE in Sweden; the common understanding is that CE includes the renting, bartering, loaning, gifting, and swapping of tangible and intangible assets (Felländer et al. 2019). The existing laws regulate, for the most part, the challenges emerging in relation to CE functioning at the national level (Markendahl et al. 2019). The processes involve partners from both the private and the public sectors, universities and institutions working in collaboration. The author concludes that in Sweden, the CE appears to be driven by goals such as environmental sustainability and opportunities to build communities rather than to increase economic efficiency and growth.

Anton Fedosov and Marc Langheinrich, the authors of the chapter *A Note on the Emerging Landscape of the Sharing Economy in Switzerland*, report that there is no agreed definition of the SE in Switzerland and that currently SE is considered as a case

of platform economy (von Stokar et al. 2018). The main stakeholders are businesses that establish online platforms for delivering goods and services to individuals; there are also few community-based non-profit SE initiatives (The Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs 2017). The dominant areas in the SE are related to transport, accommodation, goods, and services, as well as financial services. But issues such as management of data of protection, social protection of workers involved in the SE, and competitiveness among business players involved in SE platforms remain problematic. Even though almost half of the country's consumers use the SE platforms, there are significant regional differences.

In the chapter, *A Socially Engaged Model of Sharing Platforms in Turkey: Design as a Blueprint of Practices and Local Cooperations*, Özge Subaşı and Berna Kirkulak-Uludag report that Turkey has one of the fastest-growing SE (Beutin 2018). The dominant areas for the SE are the media and entertainment, retail and consumer goods, automotive, and transport sectors (Kalaycı Oflaz 2019). However, there is no official definition of CE or SE recognized in governmental documents, and there is no appropriate legislation. Also, information is lacking on the positive and negative impacts of these platforms in Turkey.

In the chapter, *United Kingdom: An Examination of the Configuration of the Sharing Economy, Pressing Issues, and Research Directions*, Rodrigo Perez-Vega, Brian Jones, Penny Travlou and Cristina Miguel report that over two-thirds of the United Kingdom's population is involved in the SE, that is firmly supported by the United Kingdom's government (Woskko 2014). But there is still no agreed definition of the phenomenon, and the SE is mainly perceived as mutually beneficial transactions made possible by the Internet and online platforms. The future of the SE depends on the sector in which businesses operate and on many other dimensions, such as customer expectations, demand, competition, technology, innovation, regulation, public views, and general acceptance or stakeholder buy-in (Knight 2020).

Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present the idea and structure of *The Collaborative Economy in Action: European Perspectives*. This book is based on the 27 European country reports presented by the members of the COST Action CA16121 *From Sharing to Caring: Examining the Socio-Technical Aspects of the Collaborative Economy* conducted between 2017–2021.

From the collected countries' reports, it is evident that SE development varies across Europe and beyond. The facts presented in the chapters reveal stronger development in some particular domains, such as transportation and accommodation services. The development of the SE reflects the needs and aspirations of consumers and provides new opportunities for obtaining goods and services in more accessible ways, for example, for a lower price and from peers.

At the same time, some features are common to most countries. Regarding the definition of CE and SE, most of the countries included in this book lack a generally accepted definition of the phenomenon. The existing definitions focus on selling, buying, swapping, or sharing goods and services via the Internet and digital platforms. Legislation focusing on the relations within the SE actors is almost non-existent in most countries. Therefore, issues related to the social protection of rights and the interests

of parties involved in the SE, taxation, competition, and data protection are unresolved in many countries.

The major players contributing to the SE development are, according to the reports included in this collection, customers, partners from both the public and the private sectors, universities, and governments.

The main achievement of this volume is that it provides the most recent country-specific approaches related to the SE conceptualization, policies, development, and functions in the countries included. Interdisciplinary approaches resulting from the authors' very diverse backgrounds give a comprehensive perspective on this innovative phenomenon. The book might support the identification of barriers and ambiguities, as well as proposing new dimensions of SE. The editors and contributors hope that the book will become a useful tool for scholars, teachers, students, practitioners, and others who are looking for answers related to the phenomena of the CE and SE and the processes explored in this volume.

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